



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

**Forest  
Service**

**Mark Twain National Forest  
Potosi – Fredericktown  
Ranger District**

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File Code: 1950

Date: August 25, 2003

Dear Neighbor,

On Wednesday night, April 24, 2002, a tornado touched down on the Potosi/Fredericktown Ranger District for approximately 14 miles. The tornados had sustained winds of 207-260 mph. Lives, homes, businesses, and a wide variety of resources were damaged and disrupted. Many families in the community were impacted by the storm.

The tornados created tremendous alterations to fuel accumulations (fuel loads). Whole trees were up-rooted, tops broken off, and stems splintered. Alterations to the fuels conditions include an increase of five to twenty-five times the overall fuel load from pre-tornado conditions. Hazardous fuel conditions create the potential for severe forest fires that could have a significant effect on the health and safety of the public and firefighters in the area. If a wildfire were to occur, state and county roadways are at risk of receiving heavy smoke resulting in unsafe conditions for vehicles. The private property and the citizens who live near or visit the area are at risk due to this increased potential for severe wild fire. The ability to respond to and safely suppress potential fires is severely decreased by the large fuel accumulations and the physical obstacles created by the downed trees.

The Forest Service asked the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) for alternative arrangements for NEPA compliance for emergency treatment of the hazardous fuels and to reduce the potential for high intensity wildland fires occurring on National Forest lands from spreading onto the intermingled private ownerships. CEQ issued "Alternative Arrangements Work plan for Compliance with The National Environmental Policy Act" on July 12, 2002. The actions identified in the alternative arrangements have been implemented and the effects have been monitored and evaluated.

We are now proposing actions for additional post-treatment rehabilitation. Proposed actions were developed to restore severely affected areas, to ensure safety, and to enhance visual quality by (1) cutting of bent over trees, suppressed trees, and the felling of root sprung trees leaning beyond vertical, and (2) prescribed burning to reduce fuel loading and to prepare sites for natural regeneration in areas not covered by CEQ alternative arrangements. The actions proposed meet the principles developed for the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy, "A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment." This strategy reflects the views of a broad cross-section of governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders and includes the guiding principle to reduce hazardous fuels.

This letter is to invite you to provide your comments on the Tornado Restoration Project. The proposed project area is located on the Fredericktown Ranger District, T32N, R6E, Sections 13-15, and 22-24; T32N, R7E, Sections 19-22, and 28-30; T32N R8E, Section 26 (See attached maps).



Specific proposed activities include the following treatments and approximate acres: prescribed burning on 1200 acres and site preparation on 920 acres. Site preparation activities include felling bent over trees, suppressed trees, and root sprung trees leaning beyond vertical.

We believe the proposed actions will improve forest and ecosystem health, allow the agency to be proactive in our pine management emphasis areas, reduce the potential of high intensity wildland fires, and will benefit natural area plant communities.

Please send your comments to the address above by September 26, 2003. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Tom McGuire at the above address or phone number. Comments or requests for information may also be sent via the Internet to: [comments-eastern-mark-twain-potosi@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-eastern-mark-twain-potosi@fs.fed.us).

Sincerely,

*Katherine W. Stuart*

KATHERINE W. STUART  
District Ranger

Enclosure